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Re: SJR O, SB 763, SB 931, SB 932

Dear Chairwoman Cox and members of the Appropriations Committee:

Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance is the statewide voice for the nonmotorized trail community helping to build and manage trails for a healthier and more prosperous Michigan. We advocate for trails policy and funding and work with communities all over the state to help to promote land and water trails at the local, state and federal level.

We are a part of a large conservation coalition working directly with the Governor and Senator Casperson on his legislation to help ensure that the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and State Parks Endowment Fund are both appropriately used as the citizens of this state intended when they voted to protect these funds in the constitution. We are here today to offer our full support for SJR O, SB 763, SB 931 and SB 932.

We are particularly supportive of two key provisions in Senate Joint Resolution O. Our members would like to see the current cap of not more than 25% of the fund to be used for development projects lifted. They would also like to ensure the proceeds of the MNRTF not be appropriated by the legislature for other uses outside the original intent of the constitutional protection.

According to a recent statewide survey conducted by MDNR, the most significant recreation need in the state is local trails and parks. By lifting the 25% cap and allowing for up to 75% of the fund to be used for development, the Trust Fund Board working with the Legislature will be in a much better position to address those vital needs.

We are committed to working with a broad array of conservation groups from around the state to help educate the citizens of Michigan about this important proposal to amend the Michigan Constitution and appreciate the committee's prompt action on this legislative package.

Bob Wilson
Executive Director
Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance

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